

UVIC RETIREES ASSOCIATION

President's Report for 2014-2015

UVRA Annual General Meeting

June 2015

As usual, the Romans had a saying for it: *festina lente*. 'Hurry up and wait' seems a good description of our work at UVRA. We know what we would like to do, but life often decides otherwise. Case in point: the UVic Strategic Plan, which specifically outlines the University's wish to work collaboratively with UVRA to improve the retirees' ability to contribute to the academic and cultural life on campus, and the academic and social contribution of the University in the community. We had thought that the UVRA Elder Academy would be one means of achieving some of those goals. The member survey which we mapped out with the Development Office was another. Both still live and breathe, but not as planned originally.

As David described in his President's Report last year, the Elder Academy idea was not deemed acceptable to the University as proposed. The University Executive's suggestion that we help define a program of educational activities through Continuing Studies went against some of our basic intentions for funding and formatting the program. So, without prejudice to future relations with Continuing Studies, we decided to go it alone for a year or two. Not quite alone, since we have teamed up with the Island Health Yakimovich Centre and Haliburton Farm for our earliest offerings. As chair of the Program Committee of the Academy, David has done a masterful job organizing half a dozen 4-part themed talks and discussions since last September.

On the research front of the Academy, and with thanks to our new 'landlord', the Centre on Aging, we are in preliminary discussions with CanAssist to provide insight into caring for the 'infirm elderly' in order to help them stay in their own homes.

The UVRA member survey which will be going out very soon will be a vital resource for our effort to estimate the direct and indirect contributions of its retirees to the University's academic and community mandate. It will add immensely to our argument for a well-defined MoU with UVic. Attached to the main survey is a brief Yes/No questionnaire that our *ad hoc* transit committee of former UVRA luminaries has designed. As a first step in defining the needs province-wide, this part of the UVRA Survey is the test-bed for the effort to make public transit more accessible and affordable for the rapidly-growing cohort of seniors in BC. Please be sure to respond to this two-part online survey.

This meeting is where we bid farewell to some of our key position-holders: Rashna Charania, Kathy Harris and Linda Metters have given us sterling service as Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Director, and with Jane Milliken have organized a slate of very well attended social events and activities which it will be hard to equal. As Vice President and former Membership Director, Cled Thomas became involved in the

UVIC RETIREES ASSOCIATION

discussion and later clarification efforts surrounding the University's introduction of the ONECard. Those discussions will continue as one of the new Board's priorities.

My thanks and best wishes to you Rashna, Kathy, Linda and Cled. We hope you'll stay in touch.

Finding replacements for these important Board positions was not easy, but I believe the new members to be nominated today will bring new insights and energies to our table. We will need both, as we seek better relations with UVic for our members and in our community. I'm sure you share my gratitude for the new candidates' willingness to stand. Like most retiree volunteers, they are busy in many other areas too, which I expect will add new perspectives to our work.

On the question of membership: it is customary to report at this meeting on any changes to the Association fees and methods of payment. I am pleased to report that our fees remain as they have been for years: \$16 per year, and 10 times that annual fee for lifetime membership. At our next regular Board meeting, we will discuss the effects or otherwise of our offer of free membership for the first year (or remaining portion) to new retirees who apply in writing. Lifetime memberships have increased rapidly – no doubt encouraged by the new Extended Health package arranged with Johnsons Inc. [for details of that, please see the Membership and the Benefits Reports.]

Finally, I would like to say a huge thanks to David Docherty. Since he 'retired' as President, he has become even more involved in our activities: chairing the Elder Academy Program Committee in its first, formative stages; attending the Tri-Universities meeting with me (and our UBC-APE and SFURA counterparts) in Vancouver, leading the search for new Board members, as chair of the Nominating Committee; giving his inimitable talks on fitness; and being a great source of helpful support and experience during my first year as President.

Respectfully submitted
Peter Liddell
President, UVic Retirees Association